



A Clear Fire Safety Message

A Fire Safety Factsheet for the Visually Impaired

Over 11 million Americans are visually impaired. During a fire emergency, the senses that visually impaired persons rely upon have a high probability of being overpowered.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA), a directorate of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), encourages the visually impaired population to practice the following precautionary steps to help protect themselves, their home and their surroundings from the danger of fire.

INSTALL AND MAINTAIN SMOKE ALARMS

- Make sure working smoke alarms are installed on each level of your home. You may want a family member or friend to assist you.
- Remember to test smoke alarms monthly and change the batteries at least once a year. You may want a family member or friend to assist you.
- Audible alarms should pause with a small window of silence between each successive cycle so that blind or visually impaired people can listen to instructions or voices of others.

DON'T ISOLATE YOURSELF

It is important that older adults speak up – 70% of the severely visually impaired population is over the age of 65.

- Speak to your family members, building manager, or neighbors about your fire safety plan and practice it with them.
- Ask emergency responders to keep your special needs information on file.

- Contact your local fire department's non-emergency line and explain your special needs. They will probably suggest escape plan ideas, and may perform a home fire safety inspection and offer suggestions about smoke alarm placement.

LIVE NEAR AN EXIT AND PLAN YOUR ESCAPE

You'll be safest on the ground floor if you live in an apartment building. If you live in a multi-story home, arrange to sleep on the first floor.

- Being on the ground floor and near an exit will make your escape easier.
- If necessary, have a ramp available for emergency exits.
- Unless instructed by the fire department, never use an elevator during a fire.
- If you encounter smoke, stay low to the ground to exit your home.
- Once out, stay out, and call 911 or your local emergency number from a neighbor's house.

BE FIRE-SAFE AROUND THE HOME

- When cooking, never approach an open flame while wearing loose clothing and don't leave cooking unattended. Use a timer to remind you of food in the oven.
- Don't overload electrical outlets of extension cords.
- Never use the oven to heat your home. Properly maintain chimneys and space heaters.
- Keep a phone near your bed and be ready to call 911 or your local emergency number if a fire occurs.

KNOW YOUR ABILITIES

Remember, fire safety is your personal responsibility...

Fire Stops With You!

For More Information Contact:
The United States Fire Administration
Office of Fire Management Programs
16825 South Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

Or visit the USFA website:
www.usfa.fema.gov





Bedroom Fire Safety Helps You Sleep Sound at Night

A Factsheet on Bedroom Fire Prevention

Each year, fire claims the lives of more than 4,000 Americans and injures more than 25,000. Bedrooms are a common area of fire origin. Nearly 1,000 lives are lost to fires that start in bedrooms. Many of these fires are caused by misuse or poor maintenance of electrical devices, such as overloading extension cords or using portable space heaters too close to combustibles. Many other bedroom fires are caused by children who play with matches and lighters, careless smoking among adults, and arson.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) and the Sleep Products Safety Council (SPSC) would like you to know that there are simple steps you can take to prevent the loss of life and property resulting from bedroom fires.

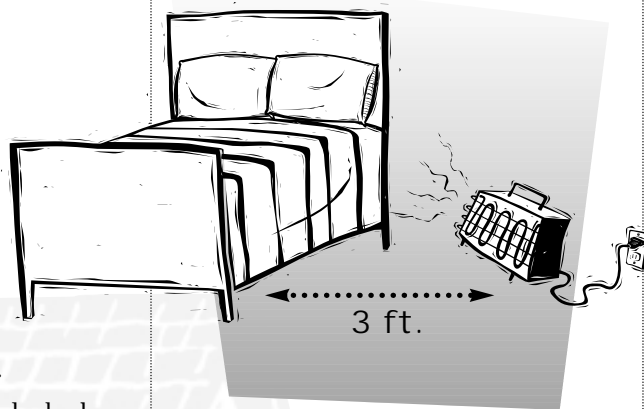
KIDS AND FIRE: A BAD MATCH

Children are one of the highest risk groups for deaths in residential fires. At home, children usually play with fire - lighters, matches and other ignitables - in bedrooms, in closets, and under beds. These are "secret" places where there are a lot of things that catch fire easily.

- Children of all ages set over 100,000 fires annually. Over 30% of fires that kill children are set by children playing with fire.
- Every year over 800 children nine years and younger die in home fires.
- Keep matches and lighters locked up and away from children. Check under beds and in closets for burnt matches, evidence your child may be playing with matches.
- Teach your child that fire is a tool, not a toy.

APPLIANCES NEED SPECIAL ATTENTION

Bedrooms are the most common room in the home where electrical fires start. Electrical fires are a special concern during winter months which call for more indoor activities and increases in lighting, heating, and appliance use.



- Do not trap electric cords against walls where heat can build up.
- Take extra care when using portable heaters. Keep bedding, clothes, curtains and other combustible items at least three feet away from space heaters.
- Only use lab-approved electric blankets and warmers. Check to make sure the cords are not frayed.

TUCK YOURSELF IN FOR A SAFE SLEEP

- Never smoke in bed.
- Replace mattresses made before the 1973 Federal Mattress Flammability Standard. Mattresses made since then are required by law to be safer.

Finally, having working smoke alarms dramatically increases your chances of surviving a fire. Place at least one smoke alarm on each level of your home and in halls outside bedrooms. And remember to practice a home escape plan frequently with your family.

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Visit our Kid's Page:
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Curious Kids Set Fires

A Factsheet for Teaching Children Fire Safety

Every day Americans experience the tragedy of fire. Each year more than 4,000 Americans die in fires and more than 25,000 are injured. Figures show that each year about 300 people are killed and \$280 million in property is destroyed in fires attributed to children playing with fire.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) encourages parents to teach children at an early age about the dangers of fireplay in an effort to prevent child injuries, fire deaths and firesetting behavior in the future. Below are some facts about children and fire safety.

CURIOUS KIDS SET FIRES

Children under five are curious about fire. Often what begins as a natural exploration of the unknown can lead to tragedy.

- Children of all ages set over 100,000 fires annually. Approximately 20,000 of those fires are set in homes.
- Children make up 20% of all fire deaths.
- Over 30% of the fires that kill children are set by children playing with fire.
- At home, children usually play with fire in bedrooms, in closets and under beds. These are "secret" places where there are a lot of things that catch fire easily.
- Too often, child firesetters are not given proper guidance and supervision by parents and teachers. Consequently, they repeat their firesetting behavior.

PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY IN YOUR HOME

- Supervise young children closely. Do not leave them alone even for short periods of time.
- Keep matches and lighters in a secured drawer or cabinet.
- Have your children tell you when they find matches and lighters.

- Check under beds and in closets for burned matches, evidence your child may be playing with fire.
- Develop a home fire escape plan, practice it with your children and designate a meeting place outside.
- Take the mystery out of fire play by teaching children that fire is a tool, not a toy.
- Teach children the nature of fire. It is FAST, HOT, DARK and DEADLY!
- Teach children not to hide from fire-fighters, but to get out quickly and call for help from another location.
- Show children how to crawl low on the floor, below the smoke, to get out of the house and stay out in the case of fire.
- Demonstrate how to stop, drop to the ground and roll if their clothes catch fire.
- Install smoke alarms on every level in your home.
- Familiarize children with the sound of your smoke alarm.
- Test the smoke alarm each month and replace the battery at least once a year.
- Replace the smoke alarm every ten years, or as recommended by the manufacturer.

Finally, having a working smoke alarm dramatically increases your chances of surviving a fire. And remember to practice a home escape plan frequently with your family.



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Danger Above

A Factsheet on High-Rise Fire Safety

Recent fatal fires in high-rise structures have prompted Americans to rethink fire safety. A key to fire safety for those who live and work in these special structures is to practice specific high-rise fire safety and prevention behaviors.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA), a directorate of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), would like you to know there are simple fire safety steps you can take to prevent the loss of life and property in high-rise fires.

BE PREPARED FOR A HIGH-RISE FIRE EMERGENCY

- Never lock fire exits or doorways, halls or stairways. Fire doors provide a way out during the fire and slow the spread of fire and smoke. Never prop stairway or other fire doors open.
- Learn your buildings evacuation plans. Make sure everyone knows what to do if the fire alarm sounds. Plan and practice your escape plan together.
- Be sure your building manager posts evacuation plans in high traffic areas, such as lobbies.
- Learn the sound of your building's fire alarm and post emergency numbers near all telephones.
- Know who is responsible for maintaining the fire safety systems. Make sure nothing blocks these devices and promptly report any sign of damage or malfunction to the building management.

DO NOT PANIC IN THE EVENT OF A HIGH-RISE FIRE EMERGENCY

- Do not assume anyone else has already called the fire department.
- Immediately call your local emergency number. Early notification of the fire department is important. The dispatcher will ask questions regarding the emergency. Stay calm and give the dispatcher the information they request.

IF THE DOOR IS WARM TO THE TOUCH

Before you try to leave your apartment or office, feel the door with the back of your hand. If the door feels warm to the touch, do not attempt to open it. Stay in your apartment or office.

- Stuff the cracks around the door with towels, rags, bedding or tape and cover vents to keep smoke out.
- If there is a phone in the room where you are trapped, call the fire department again to tell them exactly where you are located. Do this even if you can see fire apparatus on the street below.
- Wait at a window and signal for help with a flashlight or by waving a sheet.
- If possible, open the window at the top and bottom, but do not break it, you may need to close the window if smoke rushes in.
- Be patient. Rescuing all the occupants of a high-rise building can take several hours.

IF THE DOOR IS NOT WARM TO THE TOUCH

- If you do attempt to open the door, brace your body against the door while staying low to the floor and slowly open it a crack. What you are doing is checking for the presence of smoke or fire in the hallway.
- If there is no smoke in the hallway or stairwells, follow your building's evacuation plan.

- If you don't hear the building's fire alarm, pull the nearest fire alarm "pull station" while exiting the floor.
- If you encounter smoke or flames on your way out, immediately return to your apartment or office.

AFTER A HIGH-RISE FIRE EMERGENCY

- Once you are out of the building, **STAY OUT!** Do not go back inside for any reason.
- Tell the fire department if you know of anyone trapped in the building.
- Only enter when the fire department tells you it is safe to do so.

MAINTAIN AND INSTALL WORKING SMOKE ALARMS

No matter where you live, always install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Test them monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.

Remember, fire safety is your personal responsibility...*Fire Stops With You!*

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Inspections

In addition to professional preventive maintenance on a potentially CO-producing appliance, timely inspections should be performed by the occupant to identify signs of possible CO problems. Look for the following conditions, and if detected, have a professional service technician fully examine the unit for safe operation and continued use.

- ✎ Rusting or water streaking on the vent or chimney
- ✎ Loose or missing furnace panel
- ✎ Debris or soot falling from chimney, fireplace, or appliance
- ✎ Loose masonry on chimney
- ✎ Backflash of the flame out of the unit

In addition, there are signs that might indicate improper appliance operation which include:

- ✎ Decreasing hot water supply
- ✎ Furnace unable to heat house or runs constantly
- ✎ Sooting, especially on appliances
- ✎ Unfamiliar or burning odor
- ✎ Increased condensation inside windows

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Proper appliance installation and maintenance are the most critical factors in preventing carbon monoxide poisonings. Carbon monoxide alarms can be used in certain situations as a safeguard should all else fail.

How do CO alarms work?

A CO alarm activates because it detects a potentially dangerous concentration of CO. Different brands of detectors are designed with different options and features. Carefully read the product instructions, and understand what an alarm signal indicates and what actions you should take.

Purchase only Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Listed alarms manufactured after October 1, 1998. These units are less likely to cause a nuisance alarm from low concentrations of carbon monoxide.

Where should the alarm be installed?

CO distributes evenly and fairly quickly throughout the house; therefore, a CO alarm should not be installed in sleeping areas, but outside individual bedrooms in order to alert *all* occupants who are sleeping in that part of the house.

A UL Listed alarm will sound before dangerous levels of CO accumulate. Do not place the alarm in damp humid areas or in areas where the temperature is below 40°F (4.4°C) or hotter than 100°F (37.8°C). Walls are acceptable locations for mounting CO detectors, but always read and follow the manufacturer's installation instructions. If you have an AC powered alarm you should test it monthly. If your unit is battery operated, test the detector weekly and replace the batteries at least once a year.

Aren't there problems with alarms?

For various reasons, there have been some problems in the past with the use of CO alarms. Some problems were due to the alarms themselves, others to ambient air pollution or improper use of the alarms.

Avoid placing a CO alarm directly on top of or across from a fuel-burning appliance. Appliances may emit some CO when initially started.

Underwriters Laboratories responded to early concerns about nuisance alarms by revising their standard governing CO alarms (UL 2034). New UL Listed CO alarms manufactured after October 1, 1998 were required to meet the revised standard in order to bear the UL mark. These detectors will ignore low levels of CO for a much longer period of time and will be equipped with reset buttons to help confirm life-threatening CO problems.

Never ignore the alarm. If you experience nuisance alarms, have a qualified technician come to your home and carefully inspect for sources of CO from all fuel-burning appliances, including gas heating systems, gas stoves, and fireplaces.

Who can I contact for information?

For additional information you should contact the Post Occupational Safety and Health Officer.

Compiled by



FBO/OPS/SHM

Portions of this Pamphlet were excerpted from "Carbon Monoxide – The Silent, Cold Weather Killer" distributed by the American Industrial Hygiene Association.



United States Department of State
Bureau of Administration

Carbon Monoxide Hazards in Department Residences



What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide, or CO, is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas. It is produced by the incomplete combustion of solid, liquid, and gaseous fuels. Appliances fueled with gas, oil, kerosene, or wood may produce CO. If such appliances are not installed, maintained, and used properly, CO may accumulate to dangerous concentrations.

Where does CO come from?

Carbon monoxide is produced by devices that burn fuel. Therefore, any fuel-burning appliance in your home is a potential CO source. Electrical heaters and electric water heaters do not produce CO. Under normal circumstances, CO should not be detectable in the typical home or workplace.

When appliances are kept in good working condition, they produce little CO. But improperly operating or improperly vented appliances can produce elevated, even fatal, CO concentrations in your home. Likewise, using kerosene heaters or charcoal grills indoors, or running a car in a garage, can cause concentrations high enough to result in CO poisoning.

Common sources of CO include the following combustion appliances:

- ✎ Room heaters
- ✎ Furnaces
- ✎ Water heaters
- ✎ Charcoal grills
- ✎ Cooking ranges
- ✎ Automobiles run in closed garages
- ✎ Fireplaces
- ✎ Portable generators
- ✎ Wood burning stoves

Who is at risk of CO poisoning?

Any person in space with a device capable of generating CO could potentially suffer from CO poisoning. CO exposures especially affect unborn babies, infants, and people with anemia or a history of heart disease. Breathing low levels of CO can cause fatigue and increase chest pain in people with chronic heart disease.

Every year there are about 220 deaths from CO poisoning in the United States. Most of the carbon monoxide fatalities (75%) are from gas heating systems. This includes heating systems which use natural gas and propane. Fewer fatalities are caused by gas hot water heaters (5%) and kerosene or oil fired heating systems (5%). CO hazards are greater in overseas residences than in housing found in the United States. This is due to inadequate building codes, poor installation work and other factors.

Each year, nearly 15,000 people in the United States are treated in hospital emergency rooms for CO poisoning; however, this number is believed to be an underestimate. Many people with CO symptoms mistake them for the flu or are misdiagnosed by physicians.

Why is CO the silent killer?

Because CO has no warning properties, it is considered a silent killer. Heating systems and unvented, gas-fired instantaneous water heaters have caused fatalities in Department owned or leased residences. These water heaters operate only when hot water is used and many are found in bathrooms. When an unvented unit is operated in a small area such as a bathroom, it can generate life-threatening concentrations of carbon monoxide in only 15–20 minutes.

Although not always experienced, the initial symptoms of CO are similar to the flu (but without the fever). They include:

- ✎ Dizziness
- ✎ Fatigue
- ✎ Headache
- ✎ Nausea

Longer term injuries are possible as a result of severe carbon monoxide poisoning. These injuries may involve seizures, memory loss, visual impairment, personality changes, disorientation, and many other symptoms. Victims who lose consciousness are more likely to suffer from these types of problems.

It is *critical* to note that death from CO poisoning can result with some or all of these symptoms never being experienced, in which case the overexposed victim simply “falls asleep” and never regains consciousness.

How can I prevent CO poisoning?

Dangerous levels of CO can be prevented by proper appliance maintenance, installation, and use.

To avoid CO poisoning, follow these tips:

Installation:

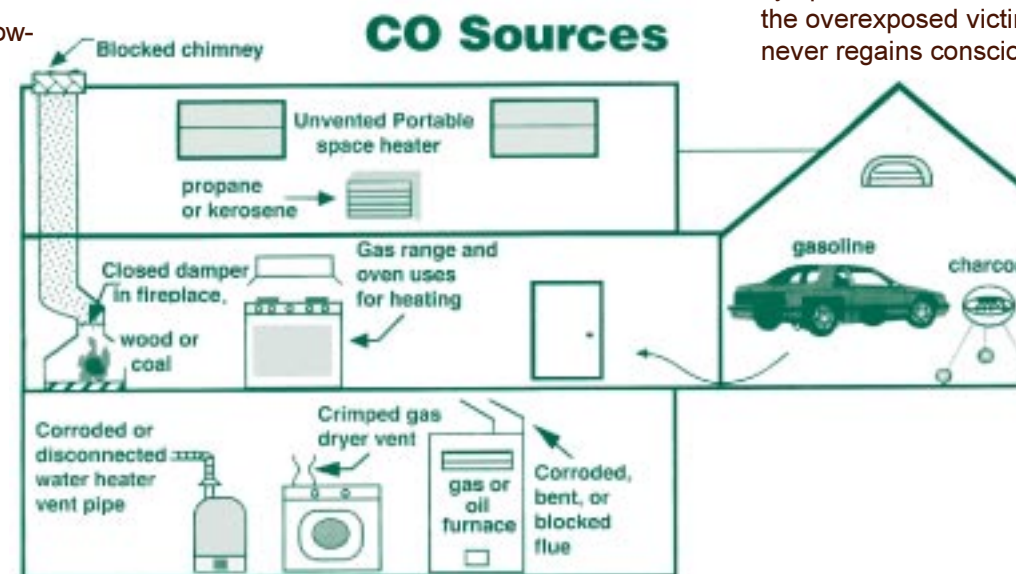
- ✎ Proper installation is critical to the safe operation of combustion appliances. All new appliances have installation instructions that should be followed exactly.
- ✎ Appliances such as hot water heaters, furnaces etc. should be vented properly, according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- ✎ Adequate combustion air should be provided to ensure complete combustion.
- ✎ All combustion appliances should be installed by professionals.

Maintenance:

- ✎ A qualified service technician should perform annual preventive maintenance in homes with central and room heating appliances.
- ✎ Chimneys and flues should be kept free of blockages, corrosion, and loose connections. Annual cleaning should be required for oil fired appliances and for other appliances depending upon the type of fuel used.
- ✎ Kerosene and gas space heaters should be cleaned and maintained, according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

Appliance Use:

- ✎ Follow the manufacturer’s directions for safe operation.
- ✎ Make sure the room where an unvented kerosene space heater is used is well ventilated; windows should be opened slightly and doors leading to another room should be open to allow added ventilation.
- ✎ Never use an unvented space heater overnight or in a room where you are sleeping.
- ✎ Never use charcoal grills inside a home, tent, camper, or unventilated garage.
- ✎ Don’t leave vehicles running in an enclosed garage, even to “warm up” a car on a cold morning.



Fire Reporting Information

A. Telephone:

The post shall immediately report a fire by telephone to the Operations Center, with immediate follow-up cable, under the following circumstances:

1. If there is damage to the structure or to the contents of the property in excess of \$10,000;
2. If there are injuries or deaths;
3. If there is damage to non-U.S. Government property (from a fire occurring on Government property);
4. If post operations are adversely affected;
5. If the fire is of deliberate or suspicious origin.

B. Cable

In addition to the telephonic notification described above, all fires will be reported by immediate cable to the Department. Cables shall include the caption line "For A/FBO/OPS/SAF/FIRE, A/FBO/OPS/SAF/SHEM, and DS/CR/SI" using the following TAGS: ABLD, AMGT, ASEC, UPGRADE, KSAF (including country designator). Cables reporting fires involving tenant agency space shall include the headquarters of the affected agency as an addressee.

The following data shall be included in telephone calls and cables concerning fires:

- (a) Identification of the property (e.g., Chancery, Office Building, EMR, etc.), and preliminary statement of damage to structure and contents with estimated U.S. dollar loss;
- (b) The number and extent of injuries and deaths. Identify the injured and the deceased persons. Include information on the prognosis for injured persons;
- (c) Description of damage to non-U.S. Government property from fires originating on Government property. Identify the other persons or parties affected and estimate the extent of the damage;
- (e) Identification of cause of the fire (known, unknown, suspicious origin) and circumstances relating to the fire; and
- (f) Host-country response to the fire.

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Department of State
Foreign Buildings Operations
Safety and Fire Division
Washington, DC 20520
Fax: 703-812-2302
Tel: 703-875-6988



Fire Safe and Secure

A Factsheet on Security Bar Safety

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires, and more than 25,000 are injured. Security bars may help keep your family safe from intruders, but they can also trap you in a deadly fire!

The United States Fire Administration (USFA), a division of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), encourages individuals to use the following tips to help reduce the number of fire injuries and deaths associated with security bars on windows and doors preventing fire escape.

Use Quick Release Devices On Barred Windows and Doors

Windows and doors with security bars should have quick release devices to allow them to be opened immediately in an emergency. These devices operate from inside and allow the bars to be opened for emergency escape without compromising the security of your home. The quick release devices should be easy to open without the use of a key, detailed knowledge or great physical effort. Release devices vary by region and manufacturer. Contact your local fire department on a non-emergency number for information on approved release devices available in your area.

Consider Retrofitting Current Security Bars

Security bars on windows and locked doors prevent escape from fire and also impede firefighters' rescue attempts. If the security bars in your home are permanently fixed or do not have quick release devices, they should be retrofitted with release devices.

Be Aware Of Security Bar Issues When Practicing Fire Escape Routes

Know and practice fire escape plans monthly, and use them to identify and correct obstructions of windows and

doors needed for escape from a deadly fire. Make sure that windows are not stuck, screens can be taken out quickly and that security bars can be properly opened.

It is important that everyone in the family understands and practices how to properly operate locked or barred windows and doors. Windows should open easily and be wide enough to allow escape, and locked or barred doors should operate quickly and easily.

Plan Two Exits Out Of Each Room

The best escape plans have two ways to get out of each room. If the primary exit is blocked by fire or smoke, you will need a second way out. A secondary route might be a window onto an adjacent roof.

Designate A Meeting Place Outside and Take Attendance

Designate a meeting location away from the home, but not necessarily across the street. For example, meet under a specific tree, at the end of the driveway, or on the front sidewalk to make sure everyone has gotten out safely. Designate one person to go to a neighbor's home to phone the fire department.

Once Out, Stay Out

Remember to escape first, then notify the fire department using the 911 system or proper local emergency number in your area. Never go back into a burning building for any reason. Teach children not to hide from firefighters.

Finally, having working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home dramatically increases your chances of survival. Smoke alarm batteries need to be tested every month and changed with new ones at least once a year. Also, consider replacing the entire smoke alarm every ten years, or as the manufacturer guidelines recommend.



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Fire-safe Landscaping Can Save Your Home

A Factsheet on Rural Fire Safety and Prevention

Wildland fires destroy hundreds of homes and acres of land every year across the country. Fire-safe landscaping is an effective tool that creates an area of defensible space between your home and flammable vegetation that protects against devastating fires.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) encourages you to keep fire safety at the forefront by learning how to landscape and maintain your property to minimize possible fire damage and slow fires if they start. Remember, fire safety is your personal responsibility... *Fire Stops With You!*

DEFENSIBLE SPACE WORKS

During the 1993 raging Malibu fires, a number of homes were saved as a result of the owners' careful pruning and landscaping techniques that protected their homes. In a fire situation, the dead trees and shrubs surrounding your home act as fuel for fire. Removing flammable vegetation reduces the threat of fire. Follow these basic rules to create defensible space that works.

- Remove all dead plants, trees and shrubs from the site.
- Reduce excess leaves, plant parts and low-hanging branches.
- Replace dense flammable plants with fire-resistant plants.

The choice of plants, spacing and maintenance are crucial elements in any defensible space landscaping plan.

TIPS FOR A FIRE-SAFE LANDSCAPE

- Create a defensible space perimeter by thinning trees and brush within 30 feet around your home.
- Beyond 30 feet, remove dead wood, debris and low tree branches.
- Eliminate small trees and plants growing under trees. They allow ground fires to jump into tree crowns.
- Space trees 30 feet apart and prune to a height of 8 to 10 feet.
- Place shrubs at least 20 feet from any structures and prune regularly.

- Plant the most drought-tolerant vegetation within three feet of your home and adjacent to structures to prevent ignition.
- Provide at least a 10 to 15 foot separation between islands of shrubs and plant groups to effectively break-up continuity of vegetation.
- Landscape your property with fire-resistant plants and vegetation to prevent fire from spreading quickly.

CHOOSE FIRE RESISTANT MATERIALS

- Check your local nursery or county extension service for advice on fire resistant plants that are suited for your environment.
- Create fire-safe zones with stone walls, patios, swimming pools, decks and roadways.
- Use rock, mulch, flower beds and gardens as ground cover for bare spaces and as effective firebreaks.
- There are no "fire-proof" plants. Select high moisture plants that grow close to the ground and have a low sap or resin content.
- Choose plant species that resist ignition such as rockrose, iceplant and aloe.
- Fire-resistant shrubs include hedging roses, bush honeysuckles, currant, cotoneaster, sumac and shrub apples.
- Plant hardwood, maple, poplar and cherry trees that are less flammable than pine, fir and other conifers.

MAINTAIN YOUR HOME AND SURROUNDING PROPERTY

- Maintain a well-pruned and watered landscape to serve as a green belt and protection against fire.
- Keep plants green during the dry season and use supplemental irrigation, if necessary.
- Trim grass on a regular basis up to 100 feet surrounding your home.
- Stack firewood at least 30 feet from your home.
- Store flammable materials, liquids and solvents in metal containers outside the home at least 30 feet away from structures and wooden fences.
- No matter where you live, always install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Test them monthly and change the batteries at least once a year. Consider installing the new long-life smoke alarms.

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Rural Fire Prevention Checklist

A Factsheet on Rural Fire Safety and Prevention

Self-reliance is the rule for fire safety for many people. If you live in an area where the local fire department is more than a few minutes away because of travel time or distance, or if you are outside the limits of the nearest town, be sure you know how to be self-reliant in a fire emergency.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) encourages you to use this fire safety checklist to help you protect yourself, your home and its surroundings from fire. Remember, fire safety is your personal responsibility... *Fire Stops With You!*

MAINTAIN HOME HEATING SYSTEMS

- Have your chimney inspected and cleaned annually by a certified specialist.
- Insulate chimneys and place spark arresters on top.
- Extend the chimney at least three feet above the roof.
- Remove branches hanging above and around the chimney.

HAVE A FIRE SAFETY AND EVACUATION PLAN

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Test them monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.
- Practice fire escape and evacuation plans.
- Mark the entrance to your property with signs that are clearly visible.
- Know which local emergency services are available and have those numbers posted.
- Provide emergency vehicle access through roads and driveways at least 12 feet wide with adequate turnaround space.

MAKE YOUR HOME FIRE-RESISTANT

- Use fire-resistant and protective roofing and materials like stone, brick and metal to protect your home. Avoid using wood materials that offer the least fire protection.
- Keep roofs and eaves clear of debris.
- Cover all exterior vents, attics and eaves with metal mesh screens no larger than 6 millimeters.
- Install multipane windows, tempered safety glass or fireproof shutters to protect large windows from radiant heat.
- Use fire-resistant draperies for added window protection.
- Keep tools for fire protection nearby: 100 foot garden hose, shovel, rake, ladder and buckets.
- Make sure water sources, such as hydrants and ponds, are accessible to the fire department.

LET YOUR LANDSCAPE DEFEND YOUR PROPERTY

- Trim grass on a regular basis up to 100 feet surrounding your home.
- Create defensible space by thinning trees and brush within 30 feet around your home.
- Beyond 30 feet, remove dead wood, debris and low tree branches.

- Landscape your property with fire resistant plants and vegetation to prevent fire from spreading quickly.
- Stack firewood at least 30 feet away from your home and other structures.
- Store flammable materials, liquids and solvents in metal containers outside the home, at least 30 feet away from structures and wooden fences.

FOLLOW LOCAL BURNING LAWS

- Do not burn trash or other debris without proper knowledge of local burning laws, techniques and the safest times of day and year to burn.
- Before burning debris in a wooded area, make sure you notify local authorities and obtain a burning permit.
- Use an approved incinerator with a safety lid or covering with holes no larger than 3/4 inches.
- Create at least a 10 foot clearing around the incinerator before burning debris.

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Special Populations Fire-Safe Checklist

A Fire Safety Factsheet for People with Special Needs

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires, and more than 25,000 are injured. Special populations such as older adults, people with disabilities, the deaf and hard of hearing and the visually impaired can significantly increase their chances of surviving a fire by practicing proven fire safety precautions.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA), a directorate of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), encourages individuals with special needs to use this fire safety checklist to help protect themselves and their home from fire. Personal responsibility is the key to fire safety...*Fire Stops With You!*

UNDERSTANDING THE RISK

Why are Special Populations at Risk?

Special populations are at risk for a number of reasons:

- Decreased mobility, health, sight, and hearing may limit a person's ability to take the quick action necessary to escape during a fire emergency.
- Depending on physical limitations, many of the actions an individual can take to protect themselves from the dangers of fire may require help from a caretaker, neighbor, or outside source.

HAVE A SOUND FIRE SAFETY AND ESCAPE PLAN

It is vitally important to make and practice escape plans. In the event of a fire, remember, time is the biggest enemy and every second counts!

- Involve the assistance of a building manager, family member, or an entrusted friend when practicing your fire escape plan.
- Know at least two exits from every room.
- If you use a walker or wheelchair, check all exits to make sure they get through the doorways.
- Practice opening locked or barred doors and windows.

- When a fire occurs, do not waste any time saving property. Leave the home immediately. Once out, stay out.

DEVELOP A HOME FIRE SAFETY PLAN

People with mobility difficulties should be encouraged to have their bedroom on the ground floor and as close as possible to an exit.

- If necessary, have a ramp available for emergency exits.
- Unless instructed by the fire department, never use an elevator during a fire.
- Be sure your street address is clearly marked and visible from the street.
- Know which local emergency services are available and have those numbers posted or memorized.

INFORM OTHERS OF YOUR SPECIAL NEEDS

Contact your local fire department on a non-emergency telephone number and explain your special needs.

- Your local fire department will be able to help you with your escape plan and may also be able to perform a home fire safety inspection, as well as offer suggestions about smoke alarm placement and maintenance.
- Ask emergency providers to keep your special needs information on file.

INSTALL AND MAINTAIN SMOKE ALARMS

Working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home dramatically increase your chances of survival.

- People with physical limitations should be aware of special fire safety devices that are available, such as smoke alarms with a vibrating pad or flashing light for the deaf and hard of hearing. In addition, smoke alarms with a strobe light outside the house can catch the attention of neighbors or others who might pass by.
- Smoke alarm batteries need to be tested every month and changed at least once a year. If you can't reach the test button on your smoke alarm, ask someone to inspect it for you.

For More Information Contact:
The United States Fire Administration
Office of Fire Management Programs
16825 South Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

Or visit the USFA website:
www.usfa.fema.gov

Visit our Kid's Page:
www.usfa.fema.gov/kids



Survive a Home Fire

In the average residential fire, everyone has only one to two minutes to get out of the house before it's engulfed in flames or smoke. Follow these tips to save your life and the lives of family members.

- * Insure that a smoke detector is installed on each level of your home.
- * Insure that at least one fire extinguisher is located in an accessible location in your house and make sure everyone knows how to use it.
- * Smoke and heat rise FAST. Teach everyone to crawl on the floor to an exit. The air is cleaner and easier to breathe near the floor.
- * Never open a door if it's hot to the touch. If you determine it safe to leave the room, always close the door behind you to prevent the fire from spreading.
- * Never try to escape into a fire, or retreat to an inaccessible place like an attic or closet.
- * Establish two escape routes for every room.
- * Settle on one place, away from the house, where family members can reunite. Never run back into a fire....you might be looking for someone who has already escaped.
- * **IMPORTANT.** Hold a fire drill and pretend a fire has broken out when everyone is in bed. Have your family practice crawling to an exit. Meet at the pre-arranged safety point and count noses.
- * Teach youngsters never to hide under beds or in closets.
- * If you're in a high-rise and the hall is filled with smoke:
 - Go back inside and call the fire department;

- Put wet towels around the door to seal out smoke;
- Open a window slightly at top and bottom and crouch there to get oxygen.
- Stay by the window to signal fire fighters.

- * If a pan of grease catches on fire, smother it with a lid or large amounts of baking soda. If fire isn't out within two minutes, leave the premises.
- * A cigarette can smolder in a sofa or chair for three hours or more, making the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning high. Replace all mattresses manufactured prior to 1973, and which do not resist cigarette ignition-type burning.

Fire Safety Tips

- * Keep attic free from combustibles such as old newspapers or magazines, etc.
- * Always use a fireplace screen.
- * Never overload electrical outlets.
- * Never store gasoline inside the home.
- * Store matches and lighters out of the reach of small children.
- * Have your chimney and heating system inspected annually.
- * Store paints, thinners and other flammables in original containers, away from heat, sparks or flame.
- * Practice fire safety when cooking.
- * Never smoke in bed.
- * Display large house numbers that the fire department can easily see. Take extra care in heating your home - particularly if space heaters are being used.

For further information concerning fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, or any other fire life safety questions, please contact J. Doug Fries, A/FBO/OPS/FIR, at (703) 875-6988 or friesjd@state.gov.

Note: A/FBO/OPS/FIR furnishes both fire extinguishers and smoke detectors for all Government Housing.